



New Regulations Will Prohibit Use of Lead Projectiles for Big- Game and Non-Game Hunting in the Range of the California Condor

Web Site: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/hunting/condor/>

After nearly a full year of public testimony, discussion, and environmental analyses, the Fish and Game Commission in December 2007 adopted regulations (Section 353, Title 14, CCR) that will prohibit the use of projectiles (bullets) containing lead for **hunting deer, bear, wild pig, elk, and pronghorn antelope** in areas designated as California condor range. Additionally, the regulations (Section 475, Title 14, CCR) will also prohibit use of lead projectiles in the same areas when **hunting coyote, ground squirrels, and other non-game wildlife**. **These regulations will be effective July 1, 2008.**

What are the lead projectiles that are prohibited?

The Commission has defined projectiles so that what is prohibited can be understood. A "projectile" is defined as *any bullet, ball, sabot, slug, buckshot or other device which is expelled from a firearm through a barrel by force*. Additionally, for hunting non-game species, projectiles include "shot" and "pellets"; lead in these projectiles is prohibited as well.

It will be illegal to use any projectile that contains more than 1 percent lead for hunting big-game and non-game species within the affected area. This includes centerfire as well as black-powder/muzzle-loader, and rimfire projectiles.

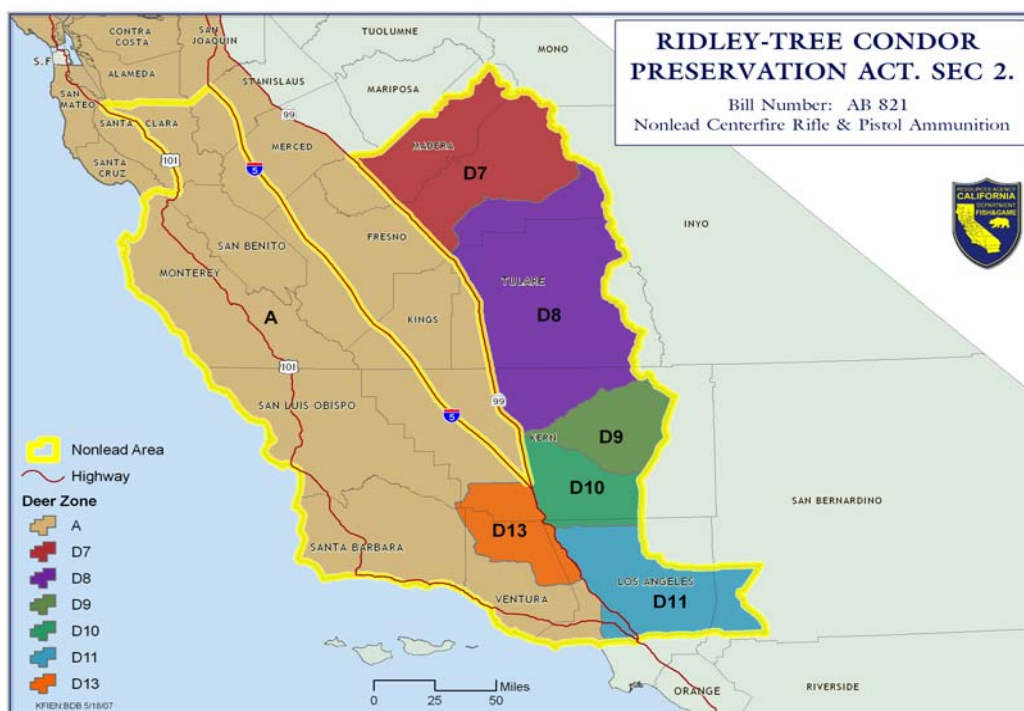
Lead Content in Projectiles

The Commission and Department are aware that trace levels of lead likely exist in any projectiles as a result of the manufacturing process. Additionally, interpretation of the statute indicates the intent is to preclude risk to the condor from lead fragmentation. Therefore, the Commission has established a maximum amount of lead content in projectiles to be 1 percent by weight. In reality, it is understood that "non-lead" identified projectiles have far less than 1 percent lead content. The Commission and Department are working on a certification process, to be completed before summer 2008, to provide a list of legal projectiles for use in the affected area.

Where

The geographic area where lead is prohibited is exactly the same area described in the recently enacted AB 821 – Ridley-Tree Condor Preservation Act (Nava) and entered into the Fish and Game Code as Section 3004.5. To assist hunters in understanding and visualizing affected areas, the lead prohibition area is also known as deer hunt zones D7, D8, D9, D10, D11, D13, and most (but not all) of the South A zone.

Map of Affected Area



Regulations and options for hunting with .22 caliber or smaller rimfire firearms

Rimfire firearms are not legal in California for hunting big-game or for depredation killing of big-game animals (primarily deer and wild pig in condor range).

Rimfire firearms are legal for non-game animals (coyotes and ground squirrels primarily) and for sport hunting of upland-game animals [hares (jackrabbits), cottontail, and tree squirrel]. However, for non-game animals the Commission has prohibited use of lead projectiles in .22 rimfire or smaller firearms as part of this regulation change in condor range.

The Commission has not addressed the issue of hunting upland game animals because that section of the regulations was not "opened" for potential change. Therefore, hunters can legally hunt jackrabbit, cottontail, and tree squirrel using lead projectiles, but not ground squirrels in the same area. Part of the reasoning for this is that unlike non-game animals that are hunted and usually left in the field, game species must be retrieved and not wasted.

The Commission and Department are of the understanding that non-lead projectiles for rimfire are not readily available or manufactured at this time and that the only non-lead rimfire is in .22 caliber magnum, and not for the very popular .22 short, long, or long rifle.

Legal Projectiles

The Commission and Department are initiating a process such that the Commission can certify projectiles as meeting the "non-lead" threshold for purposes of these regulations. This public review process will occur between February and June 2008 and will result in a listing of authorized projectiles legal for hunting within the affected area. A list of "non-lead" projectiles for informational purposes only is currently located at <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/hunting/condor/docs/nonlead-ammo-ca.pdf>.

Possession of lead projectiles within the affected area

The Commission prohibited the possession of lead projectiles, and a firearm capable of firing such projectiles, while big-game or non-game hunting within the specified area. Otherwise, lead projectiles may be possessed.

The Department's Law Enforcement Division will be interpreting and enforcing these regulations. If you have a scenario where you are not sure of legality, it is recommended that you contact a local DFG warden to seek guidance.

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